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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ROME 4207

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SUBJECT: IMPACT OF PORTUGUESE DEVELOPMENTS ON ITALIAN
POLITICAL SITUATION

REF: STATE 061703, ROME 4019 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: THE LATEST PORTUGUESE DEVELOPMENTS AND THE DC DELEGATION'S WALKOUT PROTEST HAVE CAST A PALL OVER THE PCI'S CONGRESS. THESE DEVELOPMENTS AND PCI FAILURE THUS FAR TO CONDEMN DIRECTLY THE ACTIONS OF THE PORTUGUESE MILITARY COUNCIL SUDDENLY LENT INCREASED CREDIBILITY TO THE DC'S UNQUALIFIED OPPOSITION TO THE SO-CALLED HISTORIC COMPROMISE. THE SOCIALISTS HAVE OFFICIALLY EXPRESSED DISAPPROVAL OF THE PORTUGUESE MILITARY COUNCIL ACTIONS, AND ARE SHOWING DEEP CONCERN OVER THE POSSIBLE FATE OF THE PORTUGUESE SOCIALISTS. HOWEVER, THEY PARALLEL THE PCI IN CRITICIZING THE DC REACTION AS AN EXAGGERATED ELECTORAL TACTIC, WHICH THEY APPARENTLY FEAR COULD SPARK A DC-PCI CONFRONTATION A LA 1948. HOW SERIOUS A PROBLEM THE PORTUGUESE SITUATION WILL PROVE TO BE FOR THE CREDIBILITY OF THE CPI'S HISTORIC COMPROMISE WILL DEPEND ON DEVELOPMENTS, BUT PORTUGAL BIDS FAIR TO HAVE AN EVEN MORE TRAUMATIC EFFECT ON THE ITALIAN POLITICAL SITUATION THAN CHILE. END SUMMARY.

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1. THE TIMING OF THE LATEST PORTUGUESE DEVELOPMENTS COULD

HARDLY HAVE BEEN WORSE FOR THE PCI COMING AS IT DID JUST AS THE 14TH PARTY CONGRESS WAS GETTING UNDERWAY. THE DRAMATIC DC STEP OF WITHDRAWING THE PARTY'S DELEGATION FROM THE CONGRESS CLEARLY THREW A PALL OVER THE PROCEEDINGS AND SPOTLIGHTED BOTH FOR THE PARTICIPANTS AND THE NATION THE DILEMMA THE RECENT TURN OF PORTUGUESE EVENTS POSES FOR THE PCI.

2. STARTING FROM A CAREFULLY WORDED STATEMENT MARCH 19 CRITICIZING THE DC WITHDRAWAL ACTION AS AN ELECTORAL PLOY WHICH IS NOT CONDUCIVE TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A DIALOGUE BETWEEN "THE ITALIAN DEMOCRATIC FORCES," SUBSEQUENT AUTHORITATIVE SPEAKERS AT THE PCI CONGRESS HAVE BEEN SLOWLY MOVING TOWARD A MORE CRITICAL ATTITUDE OF THE RECENT ACTIONS OF THE PORTUGUESE COMMUNIST PARTY. AT THIS JUNCTURE, THE PCI APPEARS TO BE ATTEMPTING TO MINIMIZE ITS EXPOSED POSITION ON THE PORTUGUESE QUESTION BY IMPLYING THAT THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL SHOULD SHOULDER THE MAJOR BLAME FOR ANY MISTAKES THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN MADE. AT THE SAME TIME AND WITHOUT GETTING INTO SPECIFICS, CONGRESS SPEAKERS ON MARCH 21 CAME CLOSER TO ALLEGING THAT THE PORTUGUESE COMMUNISTS HAVE ALSO ERRED THAN THE PCI HAS DONE TO DATE. IN SUBSTANCE, HOWEVER, THE PCI LEADERSHIP CONTINUES TO HOLD TO ITS INITIAL CALL FOR AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE PARTICULAR CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH THE PORTUGUESE PARTY HAS HAD TO DEVELOP. A DEFINITIVE STATEMENT ON PORTUGUESE DEVELOPMENTS COULD WELL EMERGE FROM GENERAL SECRETARY BERLINGUER'S CONCLUDING REMARKS TO THE CONGRESS ON MARCH 23.

3. CLEARLY PORTUGUESE EVENTS HAVE THROWN A MONKEY WRENCH INTO THE PCI'S LONG-TERM STRATEGY OF THE HISTORIC COMPROMISE (COMPROMESSO STORICO) WHICH HAS BEEN THE DOMINANT THEME OF THE CURRENT CONGRESS. BUT MORE IMMEDIATELY IT THREATENS TO TURN THE FORTHCOMING ADMINISTRATIVE ELECTIONS INTO A COMMUNIST VERSUS ANTI-COMMUNIST CONTEST, PRECISELY THE TYPE OF SITUATION WHICH THE PCI HAS BEEN SEEKING TO AVOID. ALREADY AWARE THAT THE PORTUGUESE EVENTS MAY HAVE HURT THEIR ELECTORAL CAUSE, THE PCI LEADERSHIP IS NOW IN THE POSITION OF HAVING TO CHOOSE BETWEEN POLITICAL EXPEDIENCY, I.E., A MORE FORTHRIGHT CRITICISM OF THE PORTUGUESE COMMUNISTS, AND THEIR COMMITMENT TO INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST SOLIDARITY. IF PAST PERFORMANCE CAN BE USED TO PREDICT THEIR BEHAVIOR IN THE PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES, WE TEND TO

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BELIEVE THAT THE PCI AT THIS CRUCIAL PERIOD IN THEIR HISTORY WILL LEAN TO THE FORMER COURSE.

4. THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY (DC) HAS PULLED OUT ALL THE STOPS IN A CHORUS OF PROTEST AGAINST THE EXCLUSION OF THE PORTUGUESE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS FROM THE SCHEDULED ELECTIONS. THE PARTY'S DELEGATION TO THE ONGOING COMMUNIST PARTY CONGRESS IN ROME WITHDREW IN PROTEST OVER THE FAILURE OF THE PCI TO

CRITICIZE THE ATTITUDE OF THE PORTUGUESE COMMUNISTS ON THIS ISSUE. AND IMPORTANTLY, AS DC FOREIGN SECTION SOURCE TOLD EMBOFF THAT DC PARTY HEADQUARTERS HAS BEEN RECEIVING A SUBSTANTIAL VOLUME OF MESSAGES FROM DC RANK AND FILE AND LOCAL PARTY ORGANIZATIONS EXPRESSING SOLIDARITY WITH THE PORTUGUESE DC AND WITH THE ITALIAN CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT'S ACTION IN BOYCOTTING THE PCI ROME CONGRESS. IT IS CLEAR THAT, ASIDE FROM ITS UNDERSTANDABLE CONCERN OVER PORTUGUESE DEVELOPMENTS, THE DC CONSIDERS THE "PORTUGUESE ISSUE" HIGHLY EXPLOITABLE IN THE CAMPAIGN FOR THE JUNE REGIONAL ELECTIONS.

5. PORTUGUESE DEVELOPMENTS ARE LIKELY ALSO TO HAVE AT LEAST A TEMPORARY IMPACT ON DC INTERNAL BALANCES BY PUTTING THE PARTY'S LEFT-WING ON THE DEFENSIVE ON THE QUESTION OF DC-PCI RELATIONS. THE TWO DC LEFT-WING MINORITY FACTIONS ("BASE" AND "FORZE NUOVE," WHICH REPRESENT 20 0/0 OF THE PARTY) HAVE IN THE PAST BEEN HIGHLY CRITICAL OF THE FIRMNESS WITH WHICH THE PARTY MAJORITY AT RECENT PARTY CONCLAVES HAS FORMALLY REJECTED THE "HISTORIC COMPROMISE" ACCORD SOUGHT BY THE PCI. DC LEFT-WING MINORITY LEADERS HAVE CALLED INSTEAD, BEFORE THE PORTUGUESE EVENTS, FOR A MORE OPEN ATTITUDE TOWARD THE PCI, NOT EXCLUDING ACCEPTANCE OF PCI SUPPORT AT THE LOCAL AND NATIONAL LEVELS UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES.

6. IMPLICIT IN THE DC LEFT'S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE PCI IS THE IDEA THAT THE PCI IS BY NOW A RESPONSIBLE AND DEMOCRATIC PARTY WHICH, IF IT COULD ONLY DEMONSTRATE ITS SUBSTANTIAL FREEDOM FROM INTERNATIONAL TIES, COULD BE AN ACCEPTIBLE PARTNER IN GOVERNMENT. THE NEANDERTHAL COMPORTMENT OF THE PORTUGUESE CP TOWARD OTHER POLITICAL PARTIES AND THE FAILURE OF THE PCI THUS FAR TO CRITICIZE THE POLICIES OF ITS PORTUGUESE FRATERNAL PARTY TEND TO UNDERSCORE THE SOLIDITY AND POTENTIAL MENACE OF THESE PCI TIES.

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7. THE INITIAL REACTION OF THE DC LEFT-WING FACTIONS TO RECENT PORTUGUESE DEVELOPMENTS WAS CAUTIOUS AND IN LINE WITH THE PARTY MAJORITY. "BASE" FACTION LEADERS YESTERDAY ISSUED A STATEMENT CRITICIZING THE "VLEAR VIOLATION OF FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS OF POLITICAL LIBERTY" INVOLVED IN THE DECISION OF THE PORTUGUESE MILITARY COUNCIL. INDIVIDUAL "FORZE NUOVE" LEADERS COMMENTED ALONG SIMILAR LINES. HOWEVER, ON MARCH 21 THE FAR LEFT DC EXPONENT GIOVANNI GALLONI (BASE) AMPLIFIED THE EARLIER STATEMENT OF THE "BASE" LEADERSHIP BY CALLING THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC AND ANTI-FASCIST CREDENTIALS OF PORTUGUESE DC INTO QUESTION. GALLONI "RESERVED JUDGMENT" ON HIS PARTY'S DECISION TO BOYCOTT THE PCI CONGRESS AND DREW THE "LESSON" FROM THE BANNING OF THE PORTUGUESE DC THAT WHEN A FORCE LIKE THE DC MOVES RIGHT, IT OPENS THE WAY FOR MILITARY COUP ATTEMPTS. GALLONI THEN CALLED ON HIS OWN PARTY TO MEDIATATE ON THIS LESSON. GALLONI'S SORTIE SUGGESTS THAT PORTUGUESE DEVELOPMENTS MAY FUEL FURTHER INTRA-PARTY POLEMICS.

8. PSI REACTION WHICH HITHERTO HAD REVEALED ONLY TACIT CONCERN OVER THE TREND TOWARD A PORTUGUESE AUTHORITARIAN REGIME, HAS BEEN PRECIPATED BY EVENTS OF LAST FEW DAYS. A FIVE-HOUR DIRECTORATE MEETING MARCH 21 UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED A DECLARATION WHICH WHILE AFFIRMING THE VALIDITY OF THE REVOLUTION AND THE POSITIVE ROLE THE MILITARY PLAYED IN IT,
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EXPRESSES UNEQUIVOCAL DISAPPROVAL OF THE BAN ON THE PORTUGUESE DC AND OTHER PARTIES FROM PARTICIPATING IN THE ELECTIONS, AND OF THE MILITARY COUNCIL'S INTENT TO "INSTITUTIONALIZE ITSELF" AFTER THE ELECTIONS. THE DOCUMENT GOES ON TO EXPRESS FULL SOLIDARITY WITH THE PORTUGUESE SOCIALIST PARTY, WHOSE ROLE IS CONSIDERED BY THE PSI TO BE "DECISIVE AND IRREPLACEABLE" IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY, AND "ESSENTIAL" TO ASSURE A POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PORTUGAL AND EUROPE. THE DIRECTORATE

EXPRESSES THE HOPE THAT FREE ELECTIONS WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF ALL PARTIES WILL BE HELD. NO MENTION AT ALL WAS MADE OF THE PORTUGUESE COMMUNISTS. THE LANGUAGE LEAVES NO DOUBT THAT THE PSI IS CURRENTLY DEEPLY WORRIED ABOUT THE POSSIBLE FATE OF SOCIALISTS IN PORTUGAL.

9. WHILE NO SPECIFIC EVIDENCE OF LOMBARDI LEFT-WING FACTION REACTION IS YET AVAILABLE, STATEMENTS BY NOTABLES OF OTHER FACTIONS INDICATE THAT THE UNANIMITY OF THE DIRECTORATE STATEMENT WAS NOT STRAINED BY ANY LEFT-WING DISSENT. IN GENERAL, HOWEVER, CONDEMNATIONS FOCUS ON THE MILITARY COUNCIL, AND REFRAIN FROM PASSING JUDGMENT ON THE PORTUGUESE COMMUNIST PARTY ROLE. AVANTI EDITOR ARFE "HAS THE IMPRESSION" THAT THE PORTUGUESE COMMUNIST PARTY IS BEING DRAGGED ALONG BY THE MILITARY, EVEN IF IT DOES NOT HESITATE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF MILITARY COUNCIL ACTIONS. THE ONLY OUTRIGHT PSI CONDEMNATION SO FAR OF THE PORTUGUESE COMMUNISTS WAS MADE BY AUTONOMIST LEADER CRAXI WHO SAID THEY ARE A "NOTORIOUS FLOWER OF STALINISM."

10. HOWEVER, WITH REGARD TO THE DC DELEGATION WALKOUT FROM THE PCI CONGRESS, THE SOCIALISTS' COMMENTS GENERALLY PARALLEL THE PCI REACTION THAT THE GESTURE WAS "PRECIPITATE," "IRRATIONAL," AND DONE OSTENTATIVELY TO SERVE ELECTORAL PURPOSES. NEITHER DOES ANY SOCIALIST COMMENT CHIDE THE PCI, EXCEPT IN THE MILDEST MANNER, FOR NOT CONDEMNING THE ACTIONS OF THE PORTUGUESE MILITARY COUNCIL. THESE REACTIONS APPARENTLY ARE MOTIVATED BY FEAR THAT THE ISSUE WILL DEVELOP INTO AN OPEN POLITICAL CONFRONTATION A LA 1948 BETWEEN THE DC AND THE PCI. INDEED, THE AVOIDANCE OF ANY SUCH CONFRONTATION HAS BEEN A LONG-STANDING PRIME CONCERN OF THE LEFT AND OTHERS IN THE CENTER-LEFT.
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11. HOW SERIOUS A PROBLEM THE PORTUGUESE SITUATION WILL PROVE TO BE FOR THE PCI'S STRATEGY TO PUSH THE HISTORIC COMPROMISE WILL DEPEND ON PORTUGUESE DEVELOPMENTS. HOWEVER, TO DATE PORTUGUESE DEVELOPMENTS HAVE TENDED TO UNIFY THE DC AND BREATHE LIFE INTO THEIR CAMPAIGN FOR THE JUNE REGIONAL ELECTIONS. MOREOVER, PSI CONCERN AND SUSPICION OF THE PCI HAS BEEN HEIGHTENED. BOTH FOR ITS PERTINENCE TO ITALIAN POLITICAL EMOTIONS AND BECAUSE OF ITS GEOGRAPHIC PROXIMITY, PORTUGAL BIDS FAIR TO HAVE AN EVEN MORE TRAUMATIC EFFECT ON THE ITALIAN POLITICAL SITUATION THAN CHILE. VOLPE

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